

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for steering a motor vehicle, comprising:
a rotatable steering device having an axis of rotation;
a transmission mechanism for translating a rotational movement of the steering device into a movement of a steering element positioned away from the axis of rotation of the steering element, and
a mount fastened to the motor vehicle for supporting the steering element, wherein the mount includes a portion extending in a direction parallel to the axis of rotation of the steering element;
wherein the mount is configured to cushion the impact of the occupant against the steering element.
2. The apparatus of Claim 1, the extending portion of the mount is configured to tilt downward in the event that the occupant impacts the steering device.
3. The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the mount is configured so that when the occupant impacts the steering device the extending portion tilts so that it extends in a direction substantially parallel to the longitudinal direction of the vehicle.
4. The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the mount is configured to pivot about an axis when tilting downward.
5. The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the mount is configured to bend when tilting downward.
6. The apparatus of Claim 5, wherein the mount includes a deformable section to facilitate bending.
7. The apparatus of Claim 5, wherein the mount includes a weakened area positioned to facilitate the downward tilting of the mount.

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8. The apparatus of Claim 7, wherein the weakened area comprises a notch.
9. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the mount is configured to shorten in length in order to cushion the impact of the occupant against the steering device.
10. The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein the mount includes a weakened area, in order to facilitate the shortening in length.
11. The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein the mount is telescopic.
12. The apparatus of Claim 11, wherein the mount includes a means for resisting the telescopic shortening of the length mount.
13. The apparatus of Claim 12, wherein the means comprises a fluid.
14. The apparatus of Claim 12, wherein the means is elastic.
15. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the mount includes a support column.
16. The apparatus of Claim 1, further comprising a fixed sub-assembly having a non-steering function attached to portion of the mount extending in a direction parallel to the axis of rotation of the steering device.
17. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein the fixed sub-assembly comprises a safety device for the protection of an occupant in the event of an impact.
18. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein the fixed sub-assembly comprises electrical functional assemblies of the motor vehicle.
19. The apparatus of Claim 17, wherein the safety device includes an airbag module.

20. The apparatus of Claim 19, wherein the airbag module is of asymmetrical design in relation to the axis of rotation of the steering device.
21. The apparatus of Claim 17, wherein the airbag module includes an inflatable airbag folded asymmetrically in relation to the axis of rotation of the steering device.
22. The apparatus of Claim 1, further comprising a fixed cladding surrounding the steering device, wherein the mount is fixed to the cladding.
23. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the mount is configured to be attached to a cross-member of the vehicle in an area of the vehicle dashboard.
24. The apparatus of one of Claim 1, wherein the steering device includes a steering shaft.
25. The apparatus of one Claim 1, wherein the transmission mechanism includes toothed gearing.
26. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the transmission mechanism includes an endless member for transmitting rotational movement of the steering device to the steering element.
27. The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein the steering element has a longitudinal axis and the support column is positioned so that in the event of an impact of a vehicle occupant the steering device tilts about a portion of the transmission mechanism arranged on the longitudinal axis of the steering element.
28. The apparatus of Claim 26, wherein the transmission arrangement acts as a lever, which extends from the longitudinal axis of the elongate steering element to the axis of rotation of the steering device.

29. The apparatus of Claim 27, wherein the transmission mechanism can be disengaged from the steering device and the steering element by forces acting on the steering device in the event of an impact of a vehicle occupant.
30. The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the transmission mechanism is arranged in a housing configured to be damaged by the tilting of the mount.
31. The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein the transmission mechanism is arranged in a housing configured to be damaged by the compression of the mount.
32. The apparatus of Claim 29, wherein the housing includes a predefined breaking point.
33. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the steering device and the transmission mechanism are designed as a pre-assembled module, which can be connected to the steering element.
34. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the steering device includes a steering wheel.